



SAVE A LIFE:

Put The Cell Phone Down

October 1: Cell Phone Use **RESTRICTED**
While Driving in Maryland

What is Focused Driving?

Focused driving is concentrating on the coordination of your hands, feet, eyes, ears, and body movements while deciding how to react to what you see, hear, and feel in relation to other cars and drivers, traffic signs and signals, conditions of the highway, and the performance of your car.

DRIVERS TO DISTRACTION

- Engaging in hand-held or hands-free cell phone conversations
- Other passengers, especially children
- Reading a road map or adjusting the navigation system
- Dealing with shifting cargo or something that has dropped on the floor
- Eating, drinking beverages or smoking
- Checking PDA's, browsing the Internet or text messaging
- Adjusting the radio, CD player, iPod® or mp3 Player
- Grooming
- Driving an unfamiliar vehicle

THOUGHTS FOR THE ROAD

Distracted driving is the presence of anything that can distract a driver's physical and mental attention from driving.

Nearly 80% of crashes and 65% of near crashes involve some form of driver inattention within three seconds preceding the event.¹

A recent poll conducted by Nationwide Insurance indicated 98% of people feel they are safe drivers, yet nearly three-quarters report that they perform other tasks while driving.

It is estimated that a driver makes an average of 20 major decisions during every mile of driving.²

Recent simulator studies have shown that drivers on cell phones look but fail to see up to 50% of the information in the driving environment. The same studies have indicated there is no difference in the cognitive

distraction between drivers using hand-held and hands-free devices.³

Although they tend to increase their following distance, drivers on cell phones have more rear-end crashes than drunk drivers.⁴

Text messaging continues to set usage records, according to the industry trade group. In 2008, an estimated 3.5 billion text messages were sent per day in the U.S. alone, nearly tripling the amount from the previous year. In a recent MSNBC poll, 32% of respondents admitted to texting while driving.

¹ NHTSA and Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, 2006.

² AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

³ University of Utah Simulator Study 2008

⁴ Ibid

Got Kids?

Be sure they are properly secured in an age-appropriate child passenger safety restraint.

Provide them with things to do (books, travel games, etc.) to distract them so they're not distracting you.

Don't hesitate to actually follow through with stopping the car! Just be sure to pull over where it's safe and legal to do so. It may cost you a few minutes, but aren't they worth it?

Today's teens have grown up with technology. Texting and cellphone usage is normal, natural behavior for them. Be sure to establish strict rules with the appropriate sanctions regarding the use of these technologies while driving.

Remember they'll do what you do. Even if your kids are far from the driving age, demonstrate now the behavior you'll expect later on from them. Set the right example concerning the use of cell phones and texting while driving and always be mindful of your precious cargo.

Founded in 1989, the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) is an employer-led public-private partnership dedicated to improving the safety and health of employees, their families, and members of the communities in which they live and work, by preventing traffic crashes that occur both on and off the job. The only nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to traffic safety in the workplace, NETS provides organizations of all sizes and industry-types with guidance in developing or improving their driver safety programs. For more information on NETS, visit www.trafficsafety.org.

Ease the Pressure. If expecting an important call while driving, program your phone with a unique ring from that number, signaling you to safely pull over to take the call. Consider allowing all other calls to go to voicemail.

Increase your following distance. Driver training experts suggest a following distance of 4 seconds. The 4-second following rule increases visibility and gives more time to react to what's happening in front of you, thus reducing the risk to you and your passengers.

Take control. On your personal vehicle, pre-set the climate control, radio and CD player. If driving an unfamiliar vehicle, take the time to identify the location of signals, wipers and lights.

Have a flight plan. Don't wait until you are driving to plan your route. Access mapping tools such as MapQuest or Google Maps before you leave, or take advantage of services such as OnStar Turn-by-Turn Navigation (if available on your vehicle) or other Global Positioning Systems or services.

Buckle it up. Be sure to properly secure all cargo you may be transporting including pets, potted plants and casseroles. And buckle yourself in on every trip. It's your best defense against the distracted drivers sharing the road with you.

Let it begin with ME. Make it a practice when you make a call to someone's cell phone to ask if they are driving. If the response is "yes," take it upon yourself to call them back later or ask them to return your call when they have reached their destination. If everyone did this, it would greatly reduce the number of distracted drivers sharing the roads with us.

Look at the big picture. Making or receiving a phone call while driving makes you four times more likely to be involved in a traffic crash, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. Take a moment to focus on those who are counting on you to get home safely every day before you make a choice to divert your full attention from the road.

Give your tunes a tune-up. Digital music devices (iPods, mp3 players) can pose a major distraction. Pre-set a driving playlist to provide continuous tunes without the need for adjustments. Also, it is dangerous and typically illegal to drive with headphones. Only use your device if it can be played over your vehicle's speakers.

Texting and driving don't mix. There is no way to safely drive while texting. Texting that begins at a stoplight typically carries over to when traffic is moving again. Even if you are proficient enough that you don't take your eyes off the road, your mind is off the road and your hands are off the wheel. JUST DON'T DO IT!



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Drive **focused**. Drive **smart**. Get home **safely**.